

*Walden Green Montessori  
Family Handbook*

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# Walden Green & The Montessori Method

Vision: Love of learning, Freedom to fly

Mission: Walden Green Montessori strives to educate and develop our students to prepare them for the world beyond our doors. We do this through child-centered activities that:

- Develop curiosity, creativity and character
- Foster independence and social responsibility within a community framework
- Inspire the love of learning independently and collaboratively
- Highlight global justice, fairness, and peace

Values:

**Compassion** - *Open and committed to understanding and supporting one another*

The Walden Green Montessori school community believes in a sense of openness and commitment to understanding one another. Through this understanding, we are able to instill a sense of empathy for others' perspectives and support one another by giving freely of ourselves.

**Curiosity** - *Inquisitive beyond established frameworks*

An inquisitive nature drives exploration beyond established frameworks of understanding and builds a deeper understanding of the world around us.

**Creativity** - *Originality and fostering of ideas*

Our value of curiosity sparks originality and inspires the innovation of ideas. We encourage our community to foster ideas beyond established frameworks.

**Inclusive** - *Share and receive towards understanding*

The Walden Green Our community is best when it involves a variety of perspectives. Though it is not always easy to meld ideas and visions to a common understanding, we hold true to the idea that it is in the best interest of all of us to share and receive willingly to provide a sense of clarity and a richer understanding.

**Integrity** - *Open, honest, and accountable*

At Walden Green, we hold all stakeholders to the highest level of character and accountability. We believe in ethical behavior and we will strive to make our values self evident and attractive to students.

## Liberty, Order & The Prepared Environment

The Montessori philosophy asserts that a child will only achieve an intrinsic sense of order when environmental boundaries are well defined and choices are given within those boundaries. Children inherently desire the liberty to act on their environment and to make choices concerning the structure of their day. Walden Green classrooms are multiage and multi-ability environments. Within this carefully prepared environment, children become at ease with their own abilities and are encouraged to be self motivated and aspire to their human potential.

Montessori believed that children construct knowledge within themselves. To this end, skills and materials are introduced and the child's imagination and interest lead to further exploration. Children work at their own skill and ability level regardless of age or grade. It is the teachers charge to create the environment and ensure that a child progresses through the curriculum.

Our classrooms are a place of beauty and order that physically embody the Montessori Method and the Walden Green curriculum. Work, equipment and materials are arranged in a logical sequence to foster harmony between skill levels and subject matter. Children are given choices throughout the day and are exposed to a variety of work and social situations. The prepared environment is an inviting place of wonder and excitement.

# Walden Green & The Montessori Method

## Maria Montessori

Maria Montessori was Italy's first woman physician. Born in 1870, Montessori earned degrees in engineering and medicine. In 1907, she was urged to open a child care facility for children in the San Lorenzo Quarter, a poverty stricken area of Rome. The parents of these children were forced to work long hours and the children were left to care for themselves. Montessori took on the challenge of creating an environment to meet the needs of these children and their families.

The facility and furniture were rustic but she brought with her materials that we now recognize as sensorial and practical life materials. She cautioned the teacher to allow the children to work without interruption. Montessori stated that, "Little by little they began to work with concentration and the transformation they underwent was noticeable. Their personalities grew and strange though it may seem, they showed extraordinary understanding, activity, vivacity and confidence. They were happy and joyous."

Montessori's observations of those children gave birth to what is known as the Montessori Method. Upon her initial discoveries Montessori noted, "You must realize that what happened was something so great and so stirring that its importance could never be sufficiently recognized. It is not possible that it came from my method because my method did not yet exist. This is the clearest proof that it was a revelation that emanated from the children themselves."

As word spread about what happened with the street children of San Lorenzo, Montessori continued to study the child, design materials to aid the student in all areas of the curriculum and to document her findings. Schools began to spring up in Europe, India, and the United States and eventually around the globe. Today there are over 8,000 Montessori schools world wide and over 5,000 in the United States.

## Montessori Philosophy & Psychology

The philosophy that Dr. Montessori developed is based on the notion that all children have within them potential to learn. To fully embrace those potentials, children need purposeful activities and freedom to explore their environment. Children develop and think differently than adults; they aren't simply adults in a child's body. Montessori believed that it is human nature to create, work, concentrate and explore the world. She also believed that children need a safe haven and a rich environment to satisfy these needs and ultimately develop a sense of order, self-discipline and inner joy. Montessori stated that, "A child's work is to create the person she/he will become."

Through her scientific method of study, Montessori discovered that small children, 0-6 year olds have a propensity to concentrate intently on certain elements of their environment. They seek certain activities and repeat a process over and over. She called these times the "sensitive periods." Adults need to provide opportunities in the environment during these sensitive periods to accommodate the child during this optimum learning time. The child, during this period, she said had an "absorbent mind."

Dr. Montessori's philosophy is also supported by her discovery of the Planes of Development. She found a progression of human development and characteristics that fit into four age categories: 0-6, 6-12, 12-18 and 18-24. Each plane reflects a particular growth phase and has a unique set of characteristics that relate to learning and child development. Montessori teachers are aware of these developmental stages and classroom environments are set up accordingly.

# Walden Green & The Montessori Method

## The Montessori Method

The Montessori Method of education flows from the philosophy. Students work in an environment especially prepared for their stage of development. Children are involved in a variety of self-directed activities and many subjects are interwoven, not taught in isolation. The materials and equipment are adapted to the developmental level of the child, moving from the concrete to the abstract stages. The Montessori equipment allows for the teaching of complex skills and ideas with a concrete or hands-on instructional approach. As Montessori stated, “Only practical work and experience lead the young to maturity.” She went on to assert that, “the hands are the instruments of man’s intelligence.”

Children move freely about the classroom environment working individually or in small groups. Seldom are all the students studying the same thing at the same time. The work tends to be autodidactic, that is self-correcting and much of the teaching comes from the children. Our student grouping is multiage and has two grade levels and three ages. Students work in an uninterrupted three-hour work period with individual and small group lessons given by the teacher.

Each of our classrooms has one teacher and an assistant. Many Montessorians believe the most successful classrooms have thirty to thirty-five students because of the variety of personalities, learning styles and work being done. At Walden Green, our adult/child ratio is 1:15. As educators, we believe as Montessori believed that, “the secret of good teaching is to regard the child’s intelligence as a fertile field in which seeds may be sown, to grow under the heat of flaming imagination.”

## Curriculum

Walden Green’s curriculum is based on the Montessori Method. The Montessori Method contains a philosophy of education, the psychology of the child, developmentally appropriate instructional practices and a curriculum rich in integrated subject matter. The classroom environment is created to physically embody the curriculum and deliver content with an interactive, multi-sensory instructional approach. The curriculum is also aligned with the Michigan Content Standards and Benchmarks and is regularly revised to more closely represent the current needs of children.

## Field Trips

Field trips are an integral part of a child’s experience at Walden Green. Field trips provide students with exposure to the world and an opportunity to expand their natural curiosity and drive to explore. Montessori spoke of what she termed the “going out” process becoming increasingly important for the elementary age child and a necessity for the adolescent.

Each child must have a current signed field trip permission slip in the office. All students should wear field trip attire on all field trips unless otherwise informed. Field trips may involve a fee.

## Character Education

Character education is an important element of a Montessori classroom. The Practical Life lessons teach care of the environment, serving one another and other life skills. Grace and Courtesy lessons encourage speaking politely, being helpful and considerate and how to settle disagreements peacefully. Montessori believed these skills were equally as important as academics. Montessori declared that, “If we could say, ‘We are respectful and courteous in our dealing with children, we treat them as we should like to be treated ourselves,’ we should have mastered a great educational principle and be setting an example of good education.”

# Walden Green & The Montessori Method

## Assessment

In general, the Montessori philosophy discourages traditional standardized methods of testing. In Montessori classrooms children are assessed with a continuum of developmentally appropriate forms of assessment. These assessments are designed to more authentically assess a child and provide more meaningful and timely feedback. The outcome is many times not a score but a revelation and direct feedback to provide improvement and further inquiry or remediation. This concept has made a resurgence in the field of education as of late, one that has long been a fundamental concept in the Montessori movement. Commonly used assessments in the Walden Green classrooms include:

- Teacher and student made rubrics.
- Portfolios of children's work.
- Teacher & student observation of student presentations.
- Autodidactic or self correcting materials.
- Verbal assessments to show mastery.
- Teacher observations.

However to meet state requirements and better provide a general picture for our families and the larger community of stakeholders, Walden Green students do engage in a number of more standardized assessments throughout the year. These assessments include:

The ***Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment Systems*** are accurate and reliable tools to identify the instructional and independent reading levels of all students and document student progress through one-on-one formative and summative assessments. They provide teachers with precise tools and texts to observe and quantify specific reading behaviors, and then interpret and use that data to plan meaningful instruction. In Part 1 of the assessment, the student reads aloud and talks about the systems's original, precisely leveled fiction and nonfiction books, while the teacher observes and notes the reader's behaviors on carefully constructed forms. In Part 2, the teacher conducts a revealing Comprehensive Conversation.

The ***NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association) MAP (Measures of Academic Progress)*** assessment is administered to children in second through eighth grades in the Fall, Winter, and Spring of each academic year. This assessment illustrates growth in certain skill sets over the course of the academic year. Students are assessed in the areas of reading and mathematics. This assessment is nationally normed and aligned to the Common Core Standards. Student reports are available by request and require a meeting with staff to discuss results.

The ***Renaissance Star Reading and Star Math*** assessments are administered to children in kindergarten through eighth grades in the Fall and Winter of each academic year. Star Assessments are computer-adaptive tests that measure reading, math, and early literacy skills. Computer adaptive tests adjust based on students' responses. If your child answers a question correctly, the next one is more difficult. If he or she answers incorrectly, the next is easier. The Star Assessments are not pass-or-fail tests, they adapt to the right difficulty level throughout the test to provide a highly accurate prediction of your child's ability in early literacy, reading, and math.

The ***Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress or M-Step*** is the Michigan Department of Education's state standardized test. It is administered once in the Spring of each year. It assesses each student by grade level in their ability to demonstrate skills that relate to the Michigan Content Standards & Benchmarks. The M-Step test is administered to all state students in grades third-eighth in the subjects of reading, writing and mathematics. In addition, grades five and eight are assessed in science and social studies.

# Walden Green & The Montessori Method

## Notable Montessori Alumni

Some notable Montessori alumni include: Jeff Bezos (*financial analyst & founder of Amazon.com*), Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy, Anne Frank, Julia Child, T. Berry Brazelton (*noted pediatrician & author*), Katharine Graham (*former owner & editor of the New York Times*), George Clooney, Helen Hunt, Sergey Brin & Larry Page (*founders of Google*), Jimmy Wales (*founder of Wikipedia*), Prince William and Prince Harry, Gabriel Garcia Marquez (*Nobel Prize Winner for Literature*), Peter Drucker (*management guru*).

Other notable individuals with a Montessori connection include: Alexander Graham Bell (*helped established the first Montessori class in Canada and one of the first in the United States*), Eric Erickson (*anthropologist & author had a Montessori certificate*), Jean Piaget (*noted Swiss psychologist made his first observations of children in a Montessori school*), Mister Rogers (*television personality & strong supporter of Montessori education*) and Thomas Edison (*helped found a Montessori school*).

# The School Day

## School Hours

**School starts at 8:25 A.M.** The classrooms are open to students at 8:15 A.M. Students arriving before 8:15 A.M. will wait outside until the front doors open at 8:15. Classes are dismissed at 3:30 P.M.

## Extended Care Program

The Extended Care Program is designed for before and after school hours. Before school hours are from 7:30 A.M. to 8:15 A.M. After school hours are from 3:30 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. Families interested in using the program must fill out an application and payment agreement, which can be obtained in the school office.

## Visitors

All visitors must check into the office upon arrival at the school. This includes parent volunteers and parents who visit the school frequently. Visitors are required to sign in and out of the building and/or grounds. Upon signing in you will receive either a parent badge or a visitor badge to identify your self when in the building. Upon leaving the building all visitors must sign out and return their badge. If a visitor is in the building without a badge the staff will direct the visitor or parent to the office.

## Arrival & Dismissal Procedures

**School begins promptly at 8:25 A.M. Please drop off students between 8:15 - 8:25 a.m. in the front of the school.** Arriving later than 8:25 is considered tardy. Late arrival is not only disruptive to the classroom, but causes the child arriving late to feel out of sync and unprepared for the day. It is extremely important for children to experience a positive beginning to their school day. Being on time helps to insure a good start to the day. Students arriving after 8:25 are required to go to the office to get a pass before entering the classroom. A consistent pattern of tardiness will result in referral to the attendance committee.

**The school day ends at 3:30 PM.** All students will be released from class at 3:30 PM and will wait curbside for pickup. All parents will drive up and pickup students in the dismissal line. Pulling a child from school early is a disruption to the learning process and the classroom structure. If pulling a student for early dismissal, please do so before 3:00 PM and with a valid reason. A consistent pattern of early dismissal will result in referral to the attendance committee.

**Please see the Drop Off & Pick Up Procedures Hand Out for full details on Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures.**

## Release of Students

No student will be allowed to leave Walden Green prior to dismissal time without a written request signed by: the parent/guardian, a person whose signature is on file in the Walden Green office, or the parent/guardian who comes to the Walden Green office to request the student's release. No student will be released to a person other than the custodial parent(s) or guardian without written permission signed by the custodial parent(s) or guardian.

Please use the following guidelines to aide in the safe and orderly release and dismissal of all Walden Green students:

- **The school day ends at 3:30. All students will be released from class at 3:30 and will wait curbside for pickup. All parents will drive up and pickup students in the dismissal line.**



# The School Day

- Please make car pool arrangements before your child arrives at school. Make your child aware of the person who will be picking them up.
- Send a written notice with your child to be given to the teacher.
- Make the designated person aware he/she will be asked for identification.
- If this change occurs after school begins, notify your child's teacher and the office giving a full description of the driver and the make of his/her vehicle.

## Emergencies

If, in an emergency, you are unable to pick up your child on time, please call your child's teacher immediately. If an emergency arises during the school day and your child must leave school, call the classroom and the teacher will prepare your child for departure. You **must** sign your child out at the office whenever taking him/her out of the building before dismissal time.

## Phone Calls & After School Arrangements

Students may not receive phone calls at school. Calls to the school concerning after school arrangements, not considered emergencies, will not be handled by the Walden Green staff. Please plan ahead and make after school arrangements before the start of the school day.

## Daily Attendance

Your child receives maximum benefit when he/she is in regular attendance and arrives at school on time. There is a direct correlation between consistent attendance and success in school. Students are required to be in attendance each school day unless sickness prevents them from attending. In that case, parents must call the office before the start of the school day and provide a written note upon the child's return, explaining the absence.

Attendance records are recorded each day and become part of your child's cumulative school records. Late arrivals or tardies are also documented. It is imperative to your child's education that they arrive on time each day.

Vacations are an important part of family life but we ask that you make every effort to schedule trips around the school schedule. When children miss a week of school, there is significant adjustment as they reenter the classroom environment. Even though much of our instruction is individualized, many large group lessons, student projects and activities occur that are difficult to duplicate. Please contact the school office and your child's teacher as soon as possible if your child will be absent due to family vacations.

All absences that have not been excused are considered unexcused absences. If the student has an unexcused absence, the school will notify the parents through email or phone call. The school will document this in the child's records.

Absences above ten days are considered excessive. Students who exceed ten absences during the year will be referred to the attendance committee. Excessive absenteeism can result in possible retention and will be addressed by the attendance committee and school director.

### **Truancy Process**

**10 Absences - Letter emailed to parents**

**20 Absences - Meeting with principal and teacher**

**30 Absences - After more than thirty absences, the school will file a report with the Ottawa County Truancy Officer at the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District.**

# The School Day

## School Closing & Severe Weather

In the event of inclement weather or an emergency, the Walden Green staff will make every effort to keep all children safe. The following procedures apply to such events:

- **Civil Defense Procedure:** When an official notice of impending danger provides an ample warning period, all Walden Green students will be sent home. Parents will be made aware of such a decision through radio and television announcements. In the event that there is an insufficient warning period to allow students to reach their homes safely, students will remain at the Walden Green building under the supervision of the Walden staff.
- **Severe Weather Procedure:** In the event of a tornado or severe thunderstorm watch or warning, students will remain at Walden Green under the care of the Walden staff. All possible steps will be taken to ensure the safety of all persons in the Walden Green building. Parents may exercise the option of removing their child from school with proper notice and following all applicable procedures.
- **School Closing Procedure:** At times, the winter month's extreme weather conditions make travel difficult. In making the decision to close school, Walden Green takes travel conditions and the status of other area schools into consideration. In the event that there is a school closing, for winter conditions or any other reason, Walden Green will communicate the closing to you through local radio and television stations. Please tune in to television stations: **WOTV, WZZM**, and Radio station **WGHN**.

**\*We also utilize "Remind" notifications.** Follow these instructions to sign up.

A. If you have a smartphone, get push notifications.

1. On your iPhone or Android phone, open your web browser and go to the link which will be provided by the school.

2. Follow the instructions to sign up for Remind. You'll be prompted to download the mobile app.

B. If you don't have a smartphone, get text notifications.

1. Text the message (to be provided by the school) to the number 81010.

\*Standard text message rates apply

C. If you don't have a mobile phone, get email notifications.

1. On your desktop computer, open your web browser and go to the link provided by the school

2. Follow the instructions to sign up for Remind.

# Community & Communication

## Community

When Walden Green Montessori was founded in 1983 we were fortunate to have a group of pioneer parents who had a passion for the Montessori Philosophy and for Walden Green. Many of those parents are still connected to the school supporting Walden Green in various ways. As the school has grown in numbers, it has been increasingly challenging to capture that original sense of community. It is vital to the success of the school to have in place elements that create community. What was once a natural process is now something of which we need to be deliberate. In doing so, we must always keep at the forefront the best interest of our children and it behooves us to reflect, explore and implement plans that will deepen our sense of community at our school.

The word community is derived from the Latin *communis*, the prefix *com-together* and *munis-exchange of services*. The element that brings us together is the Montessori Philosophy and the focus on creating the best learning environment for our children. It is our hope that we will come together to learn about our Montessori school, exchange ideas and volunteer services that will create a community that will ultimately benefit our children.

## Classroom Observations

We encourage parents to observe in the classrooms or learning environments. Observing prior to conferences helps the parent understand the child's day and will result in a more meaningful conference. We do have guidelines for parents and other visitors. These guidelines will allow you to observe the typical routine of a Montessori classroom. You will need to set up an observation time with your child's teacher at least a week in advance. Plan to stay for an hour. ***Always check in at the office*** and please do not bring siblings or other children when you observe.

When observing in a classroom please:

- Enter the classroom quietly and take a seat slightly away from the hub of activity.
- If students approach, say hello but don't engage in conversation. If a child continues to talk, politely request that he/she return to work.
- Notice the different ways of learning and how some students are working individually while others are in small groups.
- Observe the materials and how they are used. See if you can detect the control of error in the materials.
- Listen to the conversations between the children and notice how the noise level tends to rise and fall without the children seeming aware.
- Look for independence, order and freedom of choice. And yes, look for the child who seems to be wandering aimlessly. Know that we all need that opportunity sometimes and be aware that the child may be taking in information from the activities around him.
- The teacher may not be able to spend time with you so write down any questions or comments you have and make arrangements to call or set up a meeting.
- If you are observing your child, refrain from making requests concerning the child's work. Allow your child to make errors without correcting. Observe your child making choices in selecting material and watch quietly as she/he completes her/his work.

Observations are not scheduled during the first weeks of school. Students are becoming acclimated to the classroom and adjusting to the Montessori routine. Montessori asserted that children need to acclimate to the learning environment, that is learning how to learn and to be increasingly self-sufficient. A process she called normalization.

# Community & Communication

## Recommended Reading

We strongly encourage parents to learn all they can about the Montessori Method and philosophy. The following selection of books will provide a good base in the philosophy and practices of our school. If you would like readings on a specific subject, as they relate to Montessori, please ask a staff member for guidance.

- *Raise an Amazing Child the Montessori Way* by Tim Seldin.
- *Montessori* by Paula Polk Lillard.
- *Montessori Today* by Paula Polk Lillard.
- *The Essential Montessori* by Elizabeth Hainstock.
- *Montessori* by Angeline Stoll Lillard.
- *The Montessori Method* by Maria Montessori.
- *Maria Montessori* by E.M. Standing.
- *Montessori Today* by R.C. Orem.
- *The Absorbent Mind* by Maria Montessori.
- *The Secret of Childhood* by Maria Montessori.

## Opportunities for Parent Involvement

We strongly encourage parents to be involved with the school in a positive and productive manner. Following are some suggested opportunities for you to engage in our school community, aide in the success of your child and help the Walden Green Montessori community thrive.

- Observe in your child's classroom.
- Attend any special workshops throughout the year.
- Set up a meeting with your child's teacher to ask questions.
- Set up a meeting with the director to ask questions.
- Attend Middle School Graduation
- Volunteer in your child's classrooms.
- Schedule a tour of the building with the director.

## Conferences

Formal conferences are scheduled twice each academic year. It is a time set aside to share your child's successes and challenges. Conferences are not a time to solve a particular problem. Separate meetings to problem solve are always an option. Conferences provide an opportunity to evaluate a child's progress, present some examples of work and talk about future goals. All parents are required to attend conferences. If the times made available do not fit your schedule, please contact the classroom teacher for possible alternatives.

Conference dates can be found on the school calendar. Individual conferences are scheduled by your child's classroom teacher.

# Community & Communication

## Communication from School

Communication between home and school is vitally important. The Walden staff encourages close cooperation and open communication between school and home. Part of being a Walden parent is keeping up on the school's activities and your child's classroom. We will make every effort to communicate to you the activities in the classroom and school community. Parents can stay informed by using the following resources provided by Walden Green:

- *Principal's Newsletters*
- *Website- [waldengreen.org](http://waldengreen.org).*
- *Emails from the teachers and the office.*
- *Flyers and Announcements of upcoming events.*
- *School Work including drawings, math, writing and other items your child brings home.*

***Please check your child's backpack daily for communications from school.***

## Communication with Teachers

When you need to communicate with the classroom teacher, please call and set up a time to meet. Teachers are not available just before school begins, during departure or during the school day. They are, however, happy to meet with you after school at a time that is mutually convenient. Classroom phone messages will be retrieved at noon and 3:00 each day.

## Communication with Second Families

When parents are divorced, the school will make every effort to keep communication open with both parents. We will need addresses, including email and phone numbers for each parent. We strongly encourage both parents to attend conferences and all other family gatherings at the school.

## Concern and Question Resolution

It is critical to your child's success that all parents, children and school staff have a positive view of Walden Green and feel confident with the school and with your child's success. If concerns do arise or you have questions it is imperative that they are taken care of promptly. If a concern or question arises please:

- Address your concern to the appropriate Walden staff member.
- Classroom issues should always first be directed to the head classroom teacher. If the issue is not resolved, the teacher will present the issue to the school director.
- Issues concerning school policy and all other concerns or questions should be addressed by the school director. If the issue cannot be resolved it will be presented to the Walden Green Board of Directors by the school director.
- Go to the source; not doing so can be damaging to the school/family relationship which is imperative for your child's success.
- Please refrain from communicating your questions and concerns with instructional staff during instructional hours.
- Always address your questions and concerns. Our school staff is more than happy to meet with you to work on any issue regarding your child.

# Student Conduct

## Appropriate Dress

Children in a Montessori classroom are engaged in a variety of activities both inside and outside the classroom on a daily basis. Physical education and movement are part of the daily routine. It is important that students dress in clothing that does not impede their work and activity. Students are expected to wear clothing that is neat, clean and appropriate for school.

The Walden Green staff realizes that a child's dress can be a reflection of an individual's unique spirit. However, there are also types of dress that are a distraction to the school environment and the learning process. Students must refrain from wearing:

- Clothing with holes or tears.
- Outfits with bare midriffs.
- Cut off shorts.
- Clothing with inappropriate logos/messages.
- Pocket chains.
- Oversized pants or shorts.
- Tops with thin straps.
- Shorts and skirts mid-thigh and shorter. When arms are extended along the side of the body, clothing must be below the fingertips.
- Oversized shirts hanging down over shorts/skirts.
- Makeup.
- No piercings (except for earrings in earlobes).
- High heeled shoes.

## Field Trip Attire

We encourage children to dress up for school field trips when appropriate. It is important that when Walden Green students attend events outside the school that they show proper respect for the people and the event they are attending. At a minimum, a child should wear a collared shirt, dress pants or skirt and comfortable shoes. This change of pace shows children that field trips are a special occasion.

## Appropriate Outdoor Shoes

During the school day, children spend time in the wooded area at the school. They run and play games during physical education. It is not advisable to send your child in sandals, open toe shoes or slip ons. All students need tennis shoes with rubber soles and ties for physical activity.

## Indoor Shoes

In an effort to create a clean environment all students wear indoor shoes when in the building. Children remove their outside boots or shoes at the door when entering the building. Indoor shoes are placed on at the child's locker. All students must have one pair of indoor shoes to wear both inside the Walden Green building and in the Ferrysburg City Hall gym during Physical Education class.

## Items from Home

In general, it is best to limit the amount of items your child carries to and from school. As much as developmentally possible a child should be responsible for packing and preparing to depart for school. Items coming to school should, for the most part, be educational items. Please refrain from sending the following items to school with your child:

- **Toys.** If your child would like to share, we suggest a favorite book, an item from nature, a souvenir from a trip or something he/she has made.

# Student Conduct

- **Party invitations.** You'll find addresses of Walden Green families in the family directory. Party invitations may not be passed out at school.
- **Cell phones.** If cell phones are required for students that are involved in an after school program, or for students that ride the Harbor Transit, please give prior notification to the classroom teacher. Any cell phone brought to school should be turned off and kept in the locker until the end of the school day. Walden Green will not be held responsible for lost, stolen, missing, or broken phones.

## Lost & Found

Montessori believed in independence and that order leads to independence. Children should, at a very young age, begin to keep track of all their items coming to and from school. To aide in this process, it is helpful if you label all of your child's belongings. In the event that items do go missing, a lost and found bin is located by the main level bathrooms. Please check regularly for missing items. The lost and found items are boxed up and given to the needy on a semi-annual basis.

## Discipline Policy: A Peaceful Education

As part of an ongoing effort to enhance the peaceful learning environment at our school, we utilize a prevention program to reduce mean and aggressive behavior and bullying. This program includes staff training, student training and parent education based on the work of Dr. Marcia McEvoy - a widely recognized expert in the field of school aggression and bullying prevention. This program trains the staff on policies and procedures for intervening consistently using a shared common language with specific consequences for aggressive behavior. Our program implements a school-wide **behavior rubric system** based on precise conduct standards. Specific consequences have been developed for specific kinds of aggressive behavior. Students in schools with a rubric-based approach know how discipline is handled and are clear on the expectations for behavior in a variety of school settings. The program also focuses on how to model, teach, and reinforce pro-social behaviors such as respect for others, caring and empathic behaviors, in building positive relationships with other students and staff members. Our ultimate goal is to make all students feel safe and help them reach their full potential.

**Please review the Behavior Consequence Rubric and Student Behavior Report.**

## Severe Behavior

Pursuant to state and federal law, any person in possession of a dangerous weapon, illegal drugs, involved in arson on school property or criminal sexual conduct will be immediately and permanently expelled from Walden Green Montessori.

If the board of directors decides that behavior warrants permanent expulsion from school, a student and their family have the right to an appeal and a fair and impartial hearing before the board of directors.

## Formal Discipline Procedures

Formal discipline removes the student from school. Such discipline includes emergency removal for up to seventy-two (72) hours, suspension for up to ten (10) school days, and expulsion from Walden Green. Suspensions and expulsions may carry over into the next school year. Removal for less than one (1) school day without the possibility of suspension or expulsion may not be appealed. Suspension and expulsion may be appealed.

Students being considered for suspension or expulsion are entitled to an informal hearing with the school director prior to removal, at which time the student will be notified of the charges against him/her and will be given an opportunity to make a defense. If a student is suspended, the parents/guardians may appeal the suspension, in writing, to the school director and a formal appeal hearing will be held.

# Student Conduct

If a student commits a crime while at school or a school related event, he/she may be subject to disciplinary action as well as action by the community's legal system. These are separate jurisdictions and do not constitute double jeopardy (being tried twice for the same crime).

Students with disabilities are entitled to the rights and procedures afforded by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (I.D.E.A.) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.), or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

## Harassment & Bullying

Harassment of students is prohibited, and will not be tolerated. This includes inappropriate conduct by others as well as any other person in the school environment, including employees, board members, parents, guests, contractors, vendors and volunteers. It is the policy of the school to provide a safe and nurturing educational environment for all its students. This policy applies to all activities on school property and to all school sponsored activities whether on or off school property.

Harassment is defined as inappropriate conduct that is repeated enough, or serious enough, to negatively impact a student's educational, physical or emotional well being. This would include harassment based on any legally protected characteristics, such as sex, race, color, national origin, religion, height, weight, marital status or disability. This policy, however, is not limited to these legal categories and includes any harassment that would negatively impact students. This would include such activities as stalking, bullying, name calling, taunting, hazing or other disruptive behaviors.

Any student that believes that s/he has been a victim of harassment should immediately report the situation to his/her teacher or the school director. Every student should, and every staff member must report any situation that they believe to be harassment of a student. Reports may be made to the school director. Complaints will be investigated in a timely manner.

If the investigation finds that harassment occurred, it will result in prompt and appropriate remedial action. This may include up to expulsion for students, up to discharge for employees, exclusion for parents, guests, volunteers and contractors, removal from any officer position and/or request to resign for board members.

Retaliation against any person for complaining about harassment, or participating in a harassment investigation, is prohibited. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as harassment. Intentionally false harassment reports, made to get others into trouble, are also prohibited. Retaliation and intentional false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

The following definitions are provided for guidance only. If a student or other individual believes there has been harassment, regardless of whether it fits a particular definition, s/he should report it and allow the administration to determine the appropriate course of action.

Every reasonable effort will be made to maintain confidentiality during the investigation process. However, a proper investigation will, in some circumstances, require the disclosure of names and allegations.



# Health & Medical

## Illness

Please call or email the school office whenever your child is absent due to illness. Include the symptoms that your child is experiencing, as certain illnesses (flu-like, stomach virus, chicken pox, etc.) are reported to the local health department at the end of each week. Remember that our fever policy is that a student must remain fever free for 24 hours (without the use of medication) before they can return to school.

## Immunizations

Students must be current with all immunizations as required by law or have an authorized waiver from the State of Michigan. If a student does not have the necessary shots or waivers, the school director may remove the student or require compliance with a set deadline. This is for the safety of all students and in accordance with Michigan State law. Any questions about immunizations or waivers should be directed to the school office.

## Emergency Medical Authorization

The Walden Green Board has established a policy that every student must have an Emergency Medical Authorization Form. This form must be completed and signed by a student's parent or guardian in order to participate in any activity off school grounds. This includes field trips and other extracurricular activities, and co-curricular activities. The Emergency Medical Authorization Form is provided at the time of enrollment and at the beginning of each school year and must be completed each year.

## Use of Medications

In those circumstances where a student must take prescribed medication during the school day, the following guidelines are to be observed:

- Parents/guardians should determine, with their physician's counsel whether the medication schedule can be adjusted to avoid administering medication during school hours.
- The Medication and OTC Medication Permission Form must be filed with the school office before the student will be allowed to begin taking any medication during schools hours.
- All medications must be registered with the school office.
- All medication that is brought to the school office will be properly secured.
- Medication may be conveyed to Walden Green directly by the parent/guardian or transported by an adult delegate at parental request. This should be arranged in advance. A two to four (2-4) week supply of medication is recommended.
- Medication **may not** be sent to Walden Green in a student's lunch box, pocket, or other means on or about his/her person, except for emergency medications for allergies and/or reactions. This must be accompanied by the medical permission form signed by parent and physician.
- Any unused medications, unclaimed by the parent/guardian, will be destroyed by school personnel when a prescription is either no longer to be administered or at the end of a school year.

The parent/guardian shall have sole responsibility to instruct their student to take the medication at the scheduled time, and the student has the responsibility for both presenting himself/herself on time and taking the prescribed medication.

A log for each prescribed medication is maintained by the school, which will note the personnel giving the medication, the date, and the time of day. This log will be maintained along with the physician's written instruction and the parent's written permission release.

# Health & Medical

## Asthma Inhalers

Students, with appropriate written permission from the physician and parent/guardian, may possess and use a metered dose inhaler or dry powder inhaler to alleviate asthmatic symptoms.

## Non-Prescribed (Over-the-Counter) Medications

No staff member will be permitted to dispense non-prescribed, over-the-counter (OTC) medication to any student without the written permission of the parent/guardian and the written physician's prescription or order.

OTC medication needs to be provided by parent or guardian in an unopened original container. As with Dr. prescriptions, over-the-counter (OTC) medication needs to be delivered to school personnel by the parent/guardian with the medication permission form properly filled out by both parent/guardian and physician.

## Nutrition

We are becoming increasingly aware that there is a direct correlation between good nutrition and healthy bodies and minds. In a study done for Whitby School, Vicki Kobliner MS RD states, "Numerous studies show that well-nourished students tend to be better students, while poorly nourished students do less well academically and on standardized tests. Pervasive poor eating habits and suboptimal nutrition of children who eat a Standard American Diet (SAD) present a challenge to meeting educational and academic goals." She sites highly processed, sugary, low nutrient fast or "junk" foods which fill the body with excess empty calories as a barrier to learning. "Children are also more negatively impacted by the chemicals and additives in foods than adults, because the toxins become more concentrated on a pound for pound basis." The results are fatigue, difficulty with concentration, reoccurring headaches and/or a vague sense of not feeling well. Avoiding processed flours, sugars, additives and chemicals can make all the difference.

Lunch is an important part of the school day. It's a very relaxed social time and an opportunity for grace and courtesy. We ask that each child bring two paper or cloth napkins every day, one on which the lunch will be placed and one for the lap. With younger children, preparing food in small, easy to handle servings is suggested. Make sure the lunch box is labeled and includes a cool pack. A wide mouth thermos is great for soup or leftovers.

Please exclude the following from your child's lunch:

- Highly sugared foods.
- Highly processed foods.
- Soda.
- Juice that isn't 100% juice (many students drink water).
- Food items difficult to open or use.
- Foods with excessive additives and preservatives.

It has been our experience that a lunch high in protein with limited additives and natural sugars (i.e. fruit) helps create a calm, focused child.

Please provide your child with a nutritious midmorning snack. If your child attends after school care or studios please send your child with a nutritious after school snack.

# Annual Notices

## CMU's List of Uses of Student Directory Information Policy

Section 1136(6) of the Revised School Code, MCL 380.1136(6), requires the Central Michigan University Board of Trustees, as a public school academy authorizing body, to prepare a list of uses or instances the University commonly discloses regarding a student's directory information. "Directory information" means information contained in a student's education record that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. Even though the University does not maintain student K-12 educational records or student directory information for any student attending the public school academies that the University Board authorizes, the law requires a public school academy's authorizing body to disclose to you a list of uses or instances the University may commonly disclose your student's directory information. In addition, the law gives you the opportunity to elect not to have your student's directory information disclosed for 1 or more of these uses or instances.

### List of Uses

The University does not maintain K-12 student directory information for public school academies that are authorized by University Board. From time to time, however, the University may receive student directory information from the schools that it authorizes. For example, the University may receive certain student directory information from your school and display that information on the Center's website or in publicly available materials prepared by the Center about certain happenings, events and achievements at your school. Your school may also disclose directory information from the educational records of a student. Directory information can include the following types of information:

- Student's name, address and telephone number;
- Names of student's parents;
- Student's date and place of birth;
- Student's class designation (i.e. 1st grade, 8th grade, etc.);
- Student's extra-curricular participation;
- Student's achievement awards or honors;
- Student's weight and height if a member of an athletic team;
- Student's photograph;
- Previous educational institutions attended by the student;
- Student's dates of attendance;
- Name of school student currently attends;
- Student's electronic mail address;
- Student projects, artwork, web pages, and photographic or video images created by the school

or students in conjunction with school sponsored activities may be used for information and/or instructional purposes including, but not limited to, video and audio playback, internet and print publication, and cable television transmission.

Public school academies may disclose any of the above without prior written consent unless the school is notified to the contrary by you in writing. Each school maintains a list of student names whose parent/legal guardian (or the student if 18 years of age or an emancipated minor) has requested that disclosure be refused. The Center requests that each school authorized by the University Board review these lists and advise the Center of students that are excluded from directory information disclosures. Any student who is excluded from directory information disclosure at the school, will automatically be excluded by the Center.

### How to Request Refusal of Your Student's Directory Information

Any parent or legal guardian (or student if 18 years of age or an emancipated minor) is also entitled to separately refuse disclosure of student directory information noted above by sending the an opt out form to The Center, EHS 200, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859 or by electronic mail to: [info@thecenterforcharters.org](mailto:info@thecenterforcharters.org). If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact the Center at 989-774-2100. You may request an opt out form from the Walden Green Montessori office.

### Equal Educational Opportunity

It is the policy of Walden Green Montessori to provide an equal educational opportunity for all students.

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Any person who believes that he/she has been discriminated against on the basis of his/her race, color, disability, religion, gender, or national origin while at Walden Green or a Walden Green sponsored activity should immediately contact the school director.

Complaints will be investigated in accordance with the procedures as described by board policy. Any student making a complaint or participating in a Walden Green investigation will be protected from any threat or retaliation. The school director can provide additional information equal access to education opportunity.

## Individuals with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act provide that no individual will be discriminated against on the basis of a disability. This protection applies not just to the student, but also to all individuals who have access to Walden Green's programs and facilities.

A student can access special education services through the proper evaluation procedures. Parental involvement in this procedure is important and is required by Federal (IDEA) and State law. Contact the school director to inquire about evaluation procedures and special education programs.

## Student Records

Walden Green Montessori maintains many student records, including both directory information and confidential information.

Directory information can be provided upon request to any individual, other than a for-profit organization, even without the written consent of a parent/guardian. Parents/guardians may refuse to allow Walden Green to disclose any or all of such "directory information" upon written notification to the school office. For further information about the items included within the category of directory information and instructions on how to prohibit its release, you may consult the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which can be found in the school office.

Parents/guardians have the right to request that their student's directory information not be released to military recruiters without prior written consent. Forms for this purpose are found at the Walden Green's main office.

Other than directory information, access to all other student records is protected by (FERPA) and Michigan law. Except in limited circumstances as specifically defined in state and federal law, Walden Green is prohibited from releasing confidential educational records to any outside individual or organization without the prior written consent of the parents/guardians, or the adult student, as well as those individuals who have matriculated and entered a post-secondary education institution at any age. Such "confidential records" include test scores, psychological reports, behavioral data, disciplinary records, and communications with family and outside service providers.

Students and parents/guardians have the right to review and receive copies of all education records. Costs for copies of records may be charged to the parent/guardian. To review a student's records, please provide a written notice, identifying the requested records, to the school office. You will be given an appointment with the appropriate person to answer any questions and to review the requested student records.

Parents/guardians and adult students have the right to amend a student's record when they believe that any of the information contained in the record is inaccurate or misleading or is in violation of the student's privacy. A parent/guardian or adult student must request the amendment of a student record in writing

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and, if the request is denied, the parent/guardian or adult student will be informed of their right to a hearing on the matter.

Individuals have a right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education if they believe that the school has violated FERPA.

Consistent with the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), no student shall be required, as part of Walden Green's program or curriculum, without prior written consent of the student (if an adult, or an emancipated minor or, if an emancipated minor, his/her parents/guardian) to submit to or participate in any survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning the following:

- A. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or his/her parents/guardian;
- B. Mental or psychological problems of the student or his/her family;
- C. Sexual behavior or attitudes;
- D. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- E. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
- F. Legally recognized privileged and analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
- G. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or his/her parents/guardians; or
- H. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or to receive financial assistance under such a program).

Consistent with the PPRA and Walden Green Board policy, the school director shall ensure that procedures are established whereby parents/guardians may inspect any materials used in conjunction with any such survey, analysis, or evaluation.

Further, upon request, parents/guardians have the right to inspect a survey or evaluation created by a third party before the survey/evaluation is administered or distributed by Walden Green to the student. The parent/guardian will have access to the survey/evaluation within a reasonable period of time after the request is received by the school director.

The school will provide notice directly to parent/guardians of student enrolled in Walden Green of the substantive content of this policy, at least annually at the beginning of the school year and within a reasonable period of time after any substantive change in this policy. In addition, the Director is directed to notify the parent/guardian of the student in Walden Green, at least annually at the beginning of the school year, of the specific or approximate dates during the school year when the following activities are scheduled or expected to be scheduled:

- A. Activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of markets or for selling that information or otherwise providing that information to others for that purpose; and
- B. The administration of any survey by a third party that contains one or more of the items described in A through H above.

The Family Policy Compliance Office in the U.S. Department of Education administers both FERPA and PPRA. Parents/guardians and/or eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with the following:

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Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW 20202-4605  
Washington, D.C.  
[www.ed.gov/offices/OM/fpco](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OM/fpco)

Information inquiries may be sent to the Family Policy Compliance Office via the following email address:

[FERPA@ED.Gov](mailto:FERPA@ED.Gov)  
[PPRA@ED.Gov](mailto:PPRA@ED.Gov)

## Integrated Pest Management

**Advisory To Parents.** Walden Green Montessori uses an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to control pests. IPM is a pest management system that uses all suitable techniques in a total pest management system with the intent of preventing pests from reaching unacceptable levels or to reduce an existing population to an acceptable level. Pest management techniques emphasize pest exclusion and biological controls. However, as with most pest control programs, chemical controls may also be utilized. Walden Green's approach to pest control has always been to use chemical-free removal methods, if possible.

You have the right to be informed prior to any application of an insecticide, fungicide or herbicide made to the school grounds or building. In certain emergencies, such as an infestation or stinging insects, pesticides may be applied without prior notice to prevent injury to students, but you will be notified following any such application. If you need prior notification, please complete the information below and submit to the office. Contact the Walden Green office if you have any additional questions at (616)842-4523 x101.

## Asbestos Management Plan

The Walden Green school facilities do not contain asbestos. If you wish to view The Management Plan it is available in the administrative office or call 842-4523 x101.

## Annual Education Review

The Annual Education Review Letter is posted yearly on the website at [www.waldengreen.org](http://www.waldengreen.org) under the Walden Quick Links on the Home Page.

I have received and reviewed a copy of Walden Green Montessori's Handbook.

Print name of Parent/Guardian # 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Relation to Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Print name of Parent/Guardian # 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Relation to Student: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Please return this form to the office\*\***

Thank you!